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Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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---------- 007148
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INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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STADIS//

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL, PFOR, CH
SUBJ: PROPOSAL FOR EXCHANGE OF EXHIBITIONS WITH PRC IN 1976

REF: STATE 161172

1. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE PROPOSAL OUTLINED IN STATE 161172 IS IMPRACTICAL AND UNDESIRABLE. WHAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRC AND THE U.S. WILL BE IN 1976 IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT, SO LET US EXAMINE THIS PROJECT IN THE LIGHT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS.

2. I THINK IT IS TOO GRANDIOSE, AND FINANCIALLY WOULD BE TOO COSTLY TO TEMPT THIS GOVERNMENT WHICH IS IN THE HABIT OF REFERRING TO CHINA AS BEING POOR AND UNDEVELOPED. AN EXCHANGE AS SUGGESTED WOULD NOT RESULT IN A PROFITABLE INCREASE OF CHINESE EXPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES; ON THE CONTRARY, ITS EXPENSES WOULD ACCENTUATE THE ALREADY LARGE IMBALANCE IN OUR MUTUAL TRANSACTIONS.

3. HOW CHINA COULD FILL 500,000 SQUARE FEET, OR EVEN A MUCH SMALLER AREA, IN THE U.S. WITH ARTICLES OF INTEREST TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC IS A CHALLENGE UNLIKELY TO BE ACCEPTED. PRODUCTS ORIGINATING HERE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THOSE HAVING CULTURAL APPEAL, ARE SIMPLY NOT AVAILABLE OR APPROPRIATE FOR SUCH A PURPOSE. THOSE WITH CULTURAL APPEAL WOULD NOT ALONE SUFFICE TO COMPETE WITH THE VARIED PRESENTATIONS THAT THE UNITED
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STATES COULD READILY OFFER.

4. IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, I DOUBT THE PRC WOULD WISH THEIR MACHINERY--A MAJOR SPACE FILLER--TO SUFFER IN ESTEEM BY

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COMPARISON WITH OUR OWN. IN MEDICAL MATTERS AND IN SCIENCE GENERALLY, THEY WOULD FEAR A LOSS OF FACE IN EXPOSING COMPARATIVELY LIMITED ACHIEVEMENTS TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY. WE ARE ALREADY SUFFICIENTLY FAMILIAR WITH THEIR FEW AGRICULTURAL EXOTICS THAT ARE NOT GROWN IN THE UNITED STATES.

5. BUT THE CHIEF FACTOR TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IS THE POLTICAL ONE. I SHOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THIS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE IMPACT THE AMERICAN EXPOSITION IN PEKING MIGHT HAVE.

6. THIS IS A CLOSED SOCIETY WHERE PECUNIARY REWARDS TO INDIVIDUALS ARE, BY OUR STANDARDS, INSIGNIFICANT. ITS STABILITY DEPENDS IN CONSIDERABLE DEGREE ON REPRESSING THE INSTINCTS OF HUMAN AMBITION, SO THAT AS FEW AS POSSIBLE OF AN 800 MILLION POPULATION COMPLAIN ABOUT THE SUPERIOR AFFLUENCE OR IMPORTANCE OF FELLOW CITIZENS. TO THIS END, IT IS ALMOST ESSENTIAL TO AVOID ALLOWING THE PEOPLE TO BE SUBJECTED TO INFLUENCES, ESPECIALLY VISUAL ONES, THAT MIGHT CAUSE THEM TO BE DISCONTENTED WITH THEIR OWN LOT. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AVERAGE SCALE OF LIVING IN THE TWO COUNTRIES IS TOO GREAT TO PERMIT IT TO BE DEMONSTRATED IN THIS FASHION. ONE MUST REMEMBER THAT NO FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS, WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS, CAN BE DISTRIBUTED IN THIS COUNTRY, THAT FOREIGN LUXURY OR EVEN CHEAP CONSUMER GOODS CANNOT BE IMPORTED, THAT APART FROM SEVERAL PERMISSIBLE ITEMS, FOREIGNERS CANNOT PURCHASE CHINESE LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS OR PERIODICALS. IF CONDITIONS WERE OTHERWISE, THE FUNCTIONING OF THEIR SYSTEM WOULD BE ERODED.

7. NO DOUBT, IN TIME, THERE WEILL BE PROFOUND CHANGES IN THIS

VAST SOCIAL EXPERIMENT, PERHAPS THE MOST EXTENSIVE ONE IN HUMAN HISTORY, BUT THERE ARE NO PRESENT INDICATIONS TO THAT EFFECT.

8. IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, WHAT ELEMENTS IN THE AMERICAN EXHIBITION ARE LIKELY TO BE FRUITFUL? LET ME MENTION THEM
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SERIATIM AS SET FORTH IN REFTEL.

(A) SATELLITE TELECASTS OF CULTURAL, SPORTS, AND SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES. THEY WOULD BE VIEWED WITH CURIOSITY AND PLEASURE.

(B) LIVE PERFORMANCES BY AMERICAN PERFORMING ARTISTS, SPORTSMEN, CRAFTSMEN. THE FIRST TWO CATEGORIES ARE BEING HANDLED SATISFACTORILY THROUGH CURRENT EXCHANGES. I AM DUBIOUS ABOUT LIVE PERFORMANCES BY OUR CRAFTSMEN GENERATING ENTHUSIASM IN A NATION WHERE LITERALLY MILLIONS OF CRAFTSMEN GAIN THEIR LIVELIHOOD IN SUCH OCCUPATIONS.

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(C) LECTURES BY SPECIALISTS. I CANNOT COMMENT FULLY ON THIS BECAUSE THE REST OF THE SENTENCE IS GARBLED. NON-CHINESE SPEAKING SPECIALISTS COULD BE USEFUL IF ENOUGH SPECIALIZED INTERPRETERS WERE AVAILABLE.

(D) A FOOD BAZAAR SELLING TYPICAL AMERICAN FOODS SUCH AS BAKED BEANS, SPARERIBS, HOT DOGS, AND PIZZA. IN SURROUNDINGS HERE THE AVERAGE PERSON SPENDS TWENTY CENTS OR LESS ON A MAIN MEAL,

THE SALE OF SUCH FOODS WOULD BE MINUSCULAR. THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE FREE OR HEAVILY SUBSIDIZED.

(E) A COMPREHENSIVE AMERICAN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE COLLECTION OF THE LAST 200 YEARS, A FOLK AR EXHIBIT, A SPACE EXPLORATION EXHIBIT. ALL THESE WOULD ATTRACT INTEREST AND CURIOSITY, BUT IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE CHINESE WOULD PERMIT A SPACE EXHIBIT.

(F) A FILM FESTIVAL. I BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE FORBIDDEN BY THE AUTHORITIES. NO FOREIGN FILMS, OTHER THAN PROPAGANDA ONES FROM "FRIENDLY" COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, ARE SHOWN HERE PUBLICLY; NATIVE FILMS ARE DIRECTED TO PROPAGANDA OBJECTIVES.

(G) A PAPERBACK BOOK AND RECORD STORE WOULD PROBABLY BE FORBIDDEN.

(H) A NEWSSTAND DISPLAYING CURRENT PAPERS AND MAGAZINES. ABSOLUTELY OUT, FOR REASONS I HAVE PREVIOUSLY STATED.
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(I) A SOUVENIR BAZAAR. IF SOUVENIRS WERE GIVEN AWAY, IT WOULD BE EMBARRASSING; IT THEY WERE FOR SALE, THERE WOULD BE FEW PURCHASERS.

9. AS TO THE PROVISION OF ONE HUNDRED YOUNG AMERICANS TO BE RECRUITED, TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE, TO UNDERSTAND CHINESE CULTURE, TRADTIONS, AND HISTORY IN ORDER TO BECOME GUIDES, THIS WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE EXHIBITION WERE HELD.

10. OUR EXHIBITION WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY ATTRACT CROWDS. STARVED FOR ENTERTAINMENT, THE CHINESE WOULD FLOCK TO IT BY THE MILLIONS. WOULD THAT ENGENDER GOOD-WILL AND FRIENDSHIP TOWARD US? I THINK IT NAIVE TO BELIEVE SO.

11. LET US CONSIDER THE THEME OF FRIENDSHIP FROM THE CHINESE STANDPOINT. IT IS NEVER ABSENT FROM THEIR CONVERSATIONS, TOASTS, AND OFFICIAL SPEECHES. THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN ITS USE IN CONNECTION WITH THE UNITED STATES AND IN REFERENCE TO ANY OTHER COUNTRY WITH WHOM THEY MAINTAIN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIPS (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE SOVIET UNION). THEY ARE MUCH MORE EFFUSIVE, HOWEVER, IN SPEAKING OF THEIR FRIENDLY TIES WITH THE CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE), ALBANIA, NORTH VIET-NAM, NORTH KOREA,

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TANZANIA, AND A HOST OF OTHER NATIONS THAN THEY ARE IN REFERENCE TO THE UNITED STATES.

12. WHY IS THIS? AFTER TWENTY-THREE YEARS OF NON-INTERCOURSE BETWEEN US, WE WISELY BROUGHT ABOUT A RENEWAL OF OLD TIES. THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS VIEWED THIS CONSTRUCTIVE DECISION WITH IMMEDIATE APPROVAL. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF OUR TOURISTS WOULD LIKE TO VISIT CHINA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. MYSTERIOUS CATHAY HAS ALWAYS INTRIGUED WESTERNERS, ESPECIALLY AMERICANS. THEY THINK THEY WOULD BE WARMLY RECEIVED HERE BY THE AMIABLE NATIVES, GRATEFUL FOR OUR RECOGNITION AND PROFESSIONS OF FRIENDSHIP. ACTUALLY, THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WANT VISITS FROM ORDINARY TOURISTS FOR WHOM THEY HAVE NO ACCOMMODATIONS, WHO HAVE TO BE SUPPLIED WITH INTERPRETERS, GUIDES, TRANSPORTATION, MEDICAL CARE, AND OTHER AMENITIES, INCLUDING ANSWERS TO WHEN CAN THEY PAY THEIR RESPECTS TO CHAIRMAN MAO AND PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI.

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13 WHAT CHINESE OFFICIALS MEAN BY FRIENDSHIP IS A RELATIONSHIP FOUNDED ON THE NATIONAL SELF-INTEREST OF BOTH PARTIES. IF WE WISH TO CALL IT LOVE, OR BY ANY OTHER TERM, THAT IS AGREEABLE TO THEM. NEVERTHELESS, IF THEY THINK WE EXPECT THEM TO IMITATE OR CONFORM TO OUR WAY OF LIFE, THEY WILL POLITELY ESCAPE US. TO THEM, WE ARE STILL BARBARIANS, IMPERIALISTS, IDENTIFIED WITH THE HUNDRED YEARS OF HUMILIATION, AND UNEQUAL TREATIES, TO BE EXPLOITED TO SERVE THEIR OWN NEEDS; IN TURN, THEY TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT OUR OWN NATIONAL AIMS WILL BE ADVANCED BY CERTAIN SUPPORT FROM THEM. WE SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN PEKING WAS SACKED AND BURNED IN 1967, AND ITS EMPLOYEES ASSAULTED AND BEATEN IN THE STREETS. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY THAT SORT OF BEHAVIOR MIGHT RECUR.

14. FEW OF THEM CANBE EXPECTED TO HAVE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR INTEREST IN THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF A REVOLUTION THAT TOOK PLACE IN AMERICA TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO. I DOUBT THERE ARE MORE THAN A FEW THOUSAND MAINLAND CHINESE WHO EVER HEARD OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, OR THOMAS JEFFERSON.
THEIR COOPERATION IN MOUNTINGTHE EXHIBITION PROPOSED IN REFTEL WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY HISTORICAL CONNOTATIONS, BUT
WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER THEY THOUGHT UNUSUAL CURRENT ADVANTAGES TO THEM WOULD DERIVE FROM IT.

15. I GUESS THEIR RESPONSE WOULD BE NEGATIVE.
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